

Paraguay Declares Research for Health a Top National Priority

Presidential decree creates new system to mobilize science and technology to improve population health

Asuncion, Washington, D.C., Geneva - January 2011. Paraguay has approved a new national policy on research for health that includes a comprehensive system for fully mobilizing science and technology to improve the health of the country's population.

The new National Policy on Research, Technological Development and Innovation for Health was approved in December 2010 by presidential decree following a two-year process of consultation and consensus coordinated by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The process leading to the policy's approval involved multiple actors and beneficiaries involved in research for health in Paraguay. The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED), an international nongovernmental organization, provided technical cooperation. Others participating in the process were the Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), the National Institute of Health; the National University of Asunción, other scientific and academic institutions, nongovernmental and international organizations, and many other public and private institutions.

The policy calls for the creation of a new National System for Research for Health, a National Council for Research for Health, a National Researchers' System, and a special fund to support research for health, and includes other strategies to strengthen the development of research for health in Paraguay. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare will oversee the policy's implementation, while Paraguay's Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) will be in charge of

525 23rd St., N. W., Washington, D.C. 20037-2895, U.S.A.

Telephone: (202) 974-3000

Fax: (202) 974-3663

financing and coordinating incentives for researchers.

This new policy places Paraguay among a select group of countries that have moved from a research paradigm that focuses primarily on developing medicines and treatments for health conditions to a broader national strategy that covers all research that can help improve the health status of the population, including biomedical, social and clinical.

In adopting the new policy, Paraguay has become the first Latin American country to take up two important sets of recommendations issued recently in Latin America and the Caribbean: the conclusions of the First Latin American Conference on Research and Innovation for Health (2008) and the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization's (PAHO/WHO's) Policy on Research for Health, approved by all the ministers of health of PAHO/WHO Member Countries in 2009. Because the new policy is backed by a presidential decree, its approval represents a State decision that transcends the current government.

Next steps will be the implementation of the policy, particularly through actions aimed at rapidly strengthening the new system.

Research for health delivers excellent economic, development and social returns. PAHO and COHRED congratulate Paraguay and invite other countries to undertake similar efforts to strengthen their national systems for research for health by, among other actions, developing a comprehensive policy for research for health. PAHO/WHO and COHRED continue to offer technical assistance for such work, including monitoring and enhancing of policies on research for health, capacity development, and providing key data through the Health Research Web Americas (<http://bit.ly/HRWebAmericas>).

Contacts:

Stella Cabral, MSPBS, Paraguay : cabralbejarano.mariastella@gmail.com

Antonieta Rojas, PWR, Paraguay : ariasas@pir.ops-oms.org

Luis Gabriel Cuervo, PAHO: RP@paho.org

Francisco Becerra, COHRED: becerra@cohred.org

Press links:

<http://www.ultimahora.com/notas/384100-MSP--sienta-bases-para-impulsar--la-investigacion>

<http://www.abc.com.py/nota/realizan-lanzamiento-de-politica-de-investigacion-para-salud/>

Institutional links:

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Paraguay: www.mspbs.gov.py

CONACYT Paraguay: www.conacyt.gov.py/

PAHO/WHO Research: www.paho.org/ResearchPortal

PAHO/WHO Country Office in Paraguay: <http://new.paho.org/par/>

COHRED: www.cohred.org

Health Research Web Americas www.healthresearchweb.org ;
<http://bit.ly/HRWebAmericas>